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critic may commend its permanence, but will take even greater pleasure in its promise of work to come.

— B. W. W.

THE FORMATION OF A NATION.

THE UNION OF ITALY. By W. J. Stillman. New York: The Macmillan Company.

One of the most fascinating and dramatic episodes in the history of Europe during the nineteenth century is the success of those various movements in the Italian peninsula which have culminated in the present kingdom of Italy. Even the most optimistic friend of the House of Savoy could not indeed profess his belief that under its leadership the Italian people had gained all that they contended for during the years of secret intrigue and open revolt which preceded the final acquisition of the prize of independence. If this be true of the admirers of the present Italian dynasty, it is all the more improbable that the impartial critic will conceal from himself the many discouraging and incongruous elements in the social and political life of Italy under the present *régime*. But notwithstanding these patent blemishes, what the Italians have accomplished, and the way they have accomplished it, certainly justify the assertion that a narrative containing a detailed account of Italian history during the course of this century cannot fail to interest the English-speaking public. It should be, besides, an undisguised gratification to the American branch of that public to find among their countrymen two of the most successful interpreters of this period of history. To unfold the causes of Italian unity requires the display of a high order of talent in historical narrative. To unite in one comprehensive whole the scattered threads of the various revolutionary movements throughout the peninsula which resulted in throwing off the yoke of foreign oppression is no easy matter. Mr. Thayer's volumes on this portion of Italian history met with immediate recognition, and they will always maintain a creditable place in American historical literature. The present volume deals not only with the early phases of the "Risorgimento," but also brings the history of Italy down to the years that have

passed. Naturally in the more restricted space allotted to him Mr. Stillman cannot imitate the fullness of his predecessor. But in spite of these limitations imposed upon him by the editor of the "Cambridge Historical Series," the author has contrived to avoid the dry summary style of narration which disfigures so many of the works written as members of a series of manuals. Mr. Stillman is not only thoroughly at home with his subject, but, what is more, he is thoroughly in sympathy with it. Inspired by a love for the land that has produced so much that is great and epoch-making in the history of humanity, he traces the course of its national Renaissance in a spirit which is likely to carry the reader along into the same attitude of mind possessed by the author himself. No one can read this book without feeling the interest of the subject. These pages will help every friend of Italy—and even the most casual tourist soon becomes a friend—to bear in mind the difficulties through which she has so heroically passed, and to judge her present shortcomings in the light of the experience of the earlier decades of this century.

The course of the narrative brings up many *questiones vexatæ* about which it is useful to secure the opinion of so keen a student of Italian affairs as Mr. Stillman confessedly is. He has gone over practically all the contemporary documents, and he has, besides, had the unusual advantage of personal acquaintance with those who took a prominent part in the events he narrates. The actual relation of the ecclesiastical with the civil element of modern Italy makes it very hard to reach a just conclusion as to the influence exerted by the Church on the acquisition of independence. Mr. Stillman's position on the questions at issue between the Quirinal and the Vatican is well known. As correspondent of the *London Times* and in numerous articles in reviews he has declared that the Church of to-day is an active and irreconcilable enemy of the kingdom as at present organized. It is certainly interesting to find him impartially conceding that the Church and the clergy were of enormous help to the success of the popular agitation which ended in the French intervention of 1859. This episode, so decisive in

bringing about the accomplishment of the dreams of Italian patriots, introduces on the stage of Italian history Napoleon III., a character full of anomalies in every feature of his career, but never more enigmatic than in his conduct after that campaign which was so abruptly closed by the Peace of Villafranca. Mr. Stillman, who had an intimate knowledge of the iniquitous and fraudulent methods accompanying the so-called plebiscite by which Savoy was ceded to France, prefers not to let his personal feelings influence his judgment on the whole transaction of which this cession was a particular feature. He refers the reader to the naturally conservative statements of a French authority. He limits himself to the moderately expressed but scathing remark that Napoleon "did as much as could *a priori* have been expected of him." Mr. Stillman's hero of Italian unity is Cavour. For him he expresses unfeigned admiration. He places him far above Garibaldi and Mazzini. Cavour's diplomatic skill and his tactful leadership cannot be questioned. But it may be doubted whether the victories of diplomacy could have been won or the strokes of statesmanship made successful had not the popular enthusiasm been stirred to coöperation by the chivalric audacity of Garibaldi. For Mazzini Mr. Stillman has no sympathy. He treats him as the impracticable dreamer he undoubtedly was. His schemes of republican government were, under the conditions from which Italy had issued, absolutely impossible. Yet Mazzini's ardor and keenness stimulated many to efforts not indeed, when judged in isolation, wisely directed, but yet potent in calling forth energies which the colder and calculating genius of Cavour could never have evoked. In fact, these brilliant pages of history prove conclusively that in a great national movement there is room for all kinds of ability. No one leader could have claimed that his actions were the source of success. Each struggle, even if apparently antagonistic to what was being done elsewhere, contributed something to the momentum which overbore resistance and restored Italy to her appropriate place among the nations of the modern world.

W. L. B.